

The 2013 SURF Annual Conference: Creative Alliances 5th July; CoSLA, Edinburgh

Speakers Biographies

Andy Milne | Chief Executive | SURF



SURF is Scotland's independent network of regeneration practitioners, policy makers and academics. By sharing and channelling the experience, views and ideas and of its extensive, cross-sector membership of over 250 organisations, SURF helps to inform better policy and practice for more successful and sustainable community regeneration throughout Scotland.

Andy became Chief Executive of SURF in 2003. Prior to that, he spent 10 years as coordinator of the Wester Hailes Representative Council, which was frequently cited as a model of community led innovation and service delivery.

From 1987 to 1992, he was director of the Bathgate Area Initiatives Team, providing support and co ordination to the voluntary sector across West Lothian.

Having originally studied Architecture, Andy went into independent community work. From 1980 to 87 he developed the community owned Wester Hailes Management Agency and its 18 diverse, community run local services projects.

He is also a director of the Community Development Alliance Scotland.

Stewart Murdoch, Director, Leisure and Communities, Dundee City Council

Trained in Urban and Regional Planning, Community Education and Management, Stewart worked for 15 years in Glasgow for a variety of Urban Programme and voluntary sector projects. He left Glasgow in the European Year of Culture 1990 for Dundee.

Following local government re-organisation in 1996, Stewart was Manager of Neighbourhood Resources and Development, in 2003, Head of the Communities Department, and in September 2005, Director, Leisure and Communities for Dundee City. Since 2011, Stewart has also been Managing Director of the SCIO, Leisure & Culture Dundee.



Stewart has served on a number of national committees for the Scottish Executive and CoSLA. A board member of the Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum and Resilient Scotland, and

Director of the International Association for Community Development and the Scottish Community Development Centre. Stewart has led the UK City of Culture 2017 bid team for Dundee. He chairs the City's Cultural Agencies Network and is a Director of Dundee Rep Theatre, and Chair of the Dundee Dance Partnership.

Malcolm Fraser | Director | Malcolm Fraser Architects



Malcolm Fraser's architectural studio is celebrated for its ability to understand and promote the culture and vigour of a place. Buildings for art and culture, from DanceBase and the Scottish Poetry Library and Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh, and Scottish Ballet and The Royal Conservatoire in Glasgow, to projects onsite for Councils in Stromness and Stornoway; innovative, community-focussed social and commercial housing; and the joyful renewal of historic buildings at the Dovecot Studios, Bank of Scotland Headquarters and Linlithgow Burgh Halls, have all brought renewed life to communities.

The practice's buildings are multiple award-winning, including various Scottish Buildings of the Year Awards and a Stirling Prize finalist, while the work demonstrates a consistent philosophical approach to the integrity of the built environment. Fraser has lectured internationally, held and holds various public and professorial posts and writes on, and advocates on behalf of, politics and culture in Scotland in general. He is currently Chair of the Scottish Government's Town Centre Review, which seeks to use simple, structural change to reinvigorate communities.

Lia Ghilardi | Director | Noema Institute

Lia is a creative polymath, based in London. She is the founder and director of Noema, a UK-based organization working internationally to deliver place mapping and strategic cultural planning projects.



Internationally recognized as a leader in the field of cultural urban development, Lia has worked for more than twenty years with civic leaders, urban designers, architects and arts organisations to provide creative and integrated solutions to the challenges of place making in contemporary cities.

At City University, she leads the Culture and Regeneration module as part of the MA in Culture, Policy and Management. She is a member of the Academy of Urbanism, a network of influential thinkers, professionals and decision makers passionate about creating a better living for people in towns and cities.

Lia's background is in urban sociology (Trento University, Italy); she has an MA with Distinction in Arts Criticism from City University (London) and a Diploma in Creative Thinking Skills from the De Bono Seminars Programme (Malta).

Petra Biberbach | Chief Executive | Planning Aid for Scotland

Petra is Chief Executive of the award-winning national charity Planning Aid for Scotland, a post she has held since June 2005.

With a career spanning public, private and third sector, Petra has expertise in the fields of planning, sustainable development, land use, renewable energy, community engagement and action research.

Prior to joining Planning Aid for Scotland, Petra has held a variety of posts including Sustainable Development Adviser for CoSLA, and Environment Coordinator at Scottish Borders Council. She also worked for a number of years with CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England).



Jimmy Stringfellow | Chair | Govan Fair



Jimmy is a long-standing representative of the Govan 'Showpeople' community. He is also Chair of the Govan Fair for 2013, a popular annual street parade that dates back to 1756.

The Govan showpeople have been a creative part of the vibrant Govan community for over 100 years when Jimmy's great grandmother opened the Govan Fairground in the 1890. Over those years the showpeople community have worked closely with the Govan old Parish church and others to incubate many successful creative regeneration initiatives including the highly successful GalGael boatbuilding project.

Sir Peter Housden | Permanent Secretary | Scottish Government



Peter has served as Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and in the Department of Communities & Local Government in Whitehall, and since June 2010 as Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government. In this role, Sir Peter is principal policy adviser to the First Minister and the Cabinet, and the senior UK Civil Servant in Scotland.

In his time in Scotland to date, Peter has given great priority to meeting staff working at the front line in public services and engaging with a wide variety of stakeholders in business and in civic Scotland. As well as being responsible for over 5,000 civil servants working in the Scottish Government, Peter chairs the planning group for the Scottish Leaders Forum, which drives wider work to drive improvement across public services in Scotland. At UK level, Peter is a member of the Civil Service Board and plays an active role in a number of UK-based networks and activities.

Peter entered the Civil Service as Director-General for Schools in the Department for Education & Science in 2001 after a career in local government during which he served as Director of Education and then Chief Executive in Nottinghamshire.

Peter began working life as a schoolteacher in a comprehensive school in Shropshire and his policy interests are based on education and life-long learning, and in enabling government to connect with communities, networks and work-places. Peter is a Trustee of the RNLI and Chair of the Life Boats Fund, a Trustee of the Work Foundation and an Associate Fellow of Warwick Business School.

Cllr David O'Neill | President | CoSLA

Cllr David O'Neill has represented the people of Irvine for the past 32 years and served as Leader of North Ayrshire Council for three terms between 1999 and 2012. During his time as a North Ayrshire Councillor, Mr O'Neill also served as a member of NHS Ayrshire & Arran Health Board and as Vice-Chair of Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire.

Prior to local government re-organisation in 1996, he was a member of Cunninghame District Council and chaired the Environmental Health Committee and the Economic Development Committee.

Cllr O'Neill was elected President of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) in June 2012. He has worked in the knitwear industry for many years and was a director of a small manufacturing company for 12 years.

